

Oregon



As a steward of our nation's coastal and marine environments, NOAA addresses immediate and long-term environmental threats through its Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R). Scientists are on call around-the-clock to provide the U.S. Coast Guard and other emergency responders with critical information to help minimize environmental damage caused by oil and hazardous chemical spills. Environmental experts assess ecosystems compromised by historic or ongoing contamination and work with other organizations to conduct remediation, restoration, and monitoring of critical natural resources.

Protecting and Restoring Oregon's Coastal and Marine Areas

NOAA trust resources in Oregon include thousands of miles of rivers and streams essential to anadromous fish species such as salmon. Oregon, with 1,410 miles of Pacific coastline, 22 major estuaries, numerous minor estuaries, and tidally-influenced freshwater systems, supports marine mammals and a variety of economically important fisheries, including oysters, crabs, and finfish species. Chronic releases of numerous hazardous substances occurring over a period of decades degraded a nine-mile stretch of the lower Willamette River, a designated Superfund Site in Portland. Spills associated with the transport of hazardous substances contaminate rivers and streams. The state map on the reverse page shows key response and restoration activities in the past year.

Emergency Response

On February 4, 1999, the M/V *New Carissa*, a 639-foot bulk freight ship carrying approximately 360,000 gallons of fuel oil, ran aground in heavy seas about 150 yards off a stretch of remote sandy beach three miles north of Coos Bay. NOAA provided emergency responders with weather updates, oil trajectory information, and detailed analyses of wildlife and habitats at risk. An Incident Command System was established to coordinate the federal government's response to the incident and subsequent *in-situ* burning operations. NOAA helped to manage information flow and documentation in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations

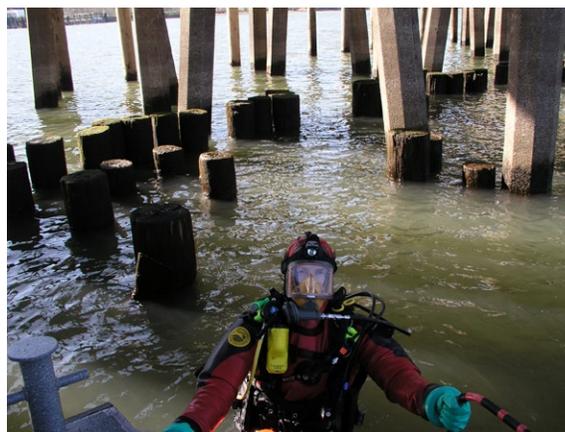
and made information available to the public on an incident Web site. NOAA continued to provide scientific information as further cleanup and salvage options are considered.



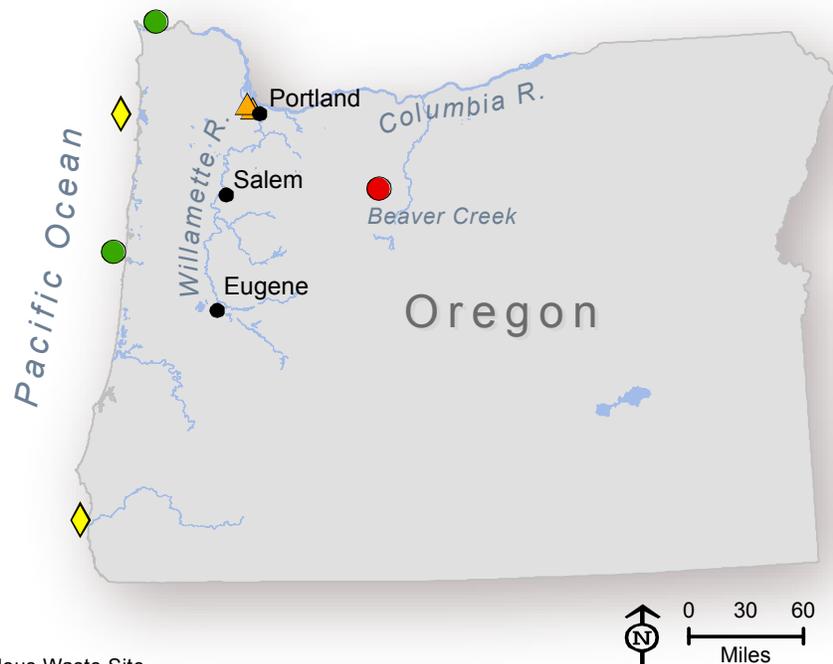
M/V *New Carissa* response

Assessment and Restoration

The Portland Harbor has been contaminated by chronic industrial and shipping discharges since the early 1900s. In 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency added a several-mile long area along the Willamette River near Portland to the Superfund National Priorities List. Working with co-trustees, NOAA is taking the lead in assessing potential injuries to natural resources such as sturgeon populations. NOAA is also providing expertise to ensure the selection of cleanup strategies are protective of natural resources in the lower Willamette River.



Diver at Portland Harbor Superfund Site



- ▲ Hazardous Waste Site
- Spill Case
- ◆ Emergency Response Support
- Marine Debris

Marine Debris

NOAA is working with Oregon Sea Grant, the Oregon Fishermen’s Cable Committee, and the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership to remove lost or abandoned crab traps in areas of heavy commercial crabbing near Astoria and Coos Bay. The derelict traps disturb seagrass habitat and kill blue crabs and other animals like stone crabs, red drum, sheephead, mullet, and the diamondback terrapins. Removing the traps will reduce mortality of vulnerable species and improve overall habitat quality.

Research

NOAA collaborates with other federal, state, and local programs to develop innovative approaches to protecting marine and estuarine environments through research and synthesis of information. The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) brings together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct and oversee basic and applied research, conduct outreach, and encourage strategic partnerships in spill response, assessment, and restoration.

NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment

**For further information about NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration,
please call (301) 713-2989 or visit our Web site at
response.restoration.noaa.gov**

Banner photo courtesy of Carol Baldwin, NOAA OMAO

